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SPECULUM ANIMAE

Four Devotional Addresses given in the Chapel
of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, to Public-
School Masters and College Tutors,
on Jan. 14 and 15, 1911

BY

WILLIAM RALPH INGE, D.D.

DEAN OF ST. PAUL'S
HONORARY FELLOW OF JESUS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

"Behold, the Lord is our Mirror; open the eyes and see
them in Him, and learn the manner of your face."—*Odes of
Solomon*, 13.

NEW IMPRESSION

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Ἡμεῖς δὲ πάντες ἀνακεκαλυμμένῳ προσώπῳ τὴν δόξαν Κυρίου. κατοπτριζόμενοι, τὴν αὐτὴν εἰκόνα μεταμορφούμεθα ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν, καθάπερ ἀπὸ Κυρίου πνεύματος.—2 COR. iii. 18.

Εἰ τις ἀκροατὴς λόγου ἐστὶν καὶ οὐ ποιητής, οὗτος ὅμοιος ἀνδρὶ κατανοοῦντι τὸ πρόσωπον τῆς γενέσεως αὐτοῦ ἐν κατόπτρῳ, κατενόησεν γὰρ ἑαυτὸν καὶ ἀπελήλυθεν καὶ εὐθέως ἐπελάθετο ὅποιος ἦν. ὁ δὲ παρακύψας εἰς νόμον τέλειον τὸν τῆς ἐλευθερίας καὶ παραμείνας, οὐκ ἀκροατὴς ἐπιλησμονῆς γενόμενος ἀλλὰ ποιητὴς ἔργου, οὗτος μακάριος ἐν τῇ ποιήσει αὐτοῦ ἔσται.—JAMES i. 23-25.

Optimus minister tuus est qui non magis intuetur hoc a te audire quod ipse voluerit, sed potius hoc velle quod a te audierit.—AUGUSTINE, *Conf.* x. 26.

SPECULUM ANIMAE

I

SATURDAY EVENING

THE Addresses are not the main part of our devotional meeting. We have been discussing to-day and yesterday certain problems of our work as teachers; and now, before we disperse, we want to be for a little while alone with God, and to help each other to be alone with God—a paradox, but true. The sympathy of a friend never yet came between a man and his Maker; we can pray best when others are kneeling by our side. Common prayer and intercession, including meditation, which is a part of prayer, are our business for the next twenty-four hours. We are staying on for that. If this is remembered, the Addresses will fall into their place. They may, please God, suggest lines of thought and subjects for prayer. Any sincere words may do this; for it is God, and not the speaker, who can make the poor sounds of the human voice the vehicles of grace, and it is the sincere word, not the clever

one, which is most likely to be thus honoured. I will promise to be simply sincere; and you for your own sakes will, I am sure, try not to be critical.

It was my privilege to hear the first two sets of Addresses given to schoolmasters and college tutors. Both were, I think, of unusual excellence. Archbishop Benson in 1886 talked to us about those fine verses from the Epistle of St. James: "If any man is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like unto a man who observeth *the face of his birth* in a mirror; for he observeth himself and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, he being no hearer that forgetteth, but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing." The Archbishop showed us how the study of God's word makes us see as in a mirror the face of our birth—the man that God meant us to be. If we remember that vision, and translate it at once into action, then we shall be gradually transformed according to God's loving purpose for us; we shall behold more and more clearly, with unveiled face, the glory of the Lord, until, as St. Paul says, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory. But if, after seeing the vision, we go our way and straightway forget what manner of man we were—then

of course we shall not see the face of our birth quite so clearly next time, for, as Bishop Butler says, passive impressions necessarily grow blunter by repetition. In January, 1888, the present Bishop of Oxford gave us an equally beautiful course on "The Hallowing of Work," and showed us how Faith, Hope, and Love may "weave one chain" in the Christian life.

I should wish to follow these two eminent teachers, whose words I personally found most helpful, in taking as my theme what is absolutely central and fundamental in religion, the relation of man as a personal and immortal spirit to God as the personal and eternal Father of spirits. It is a great comfort to feel that this is the right, indeed the only right, topic for a strictly devotional gathering. It is a great comfort not to have to speak on any controversial theme—not even to touch upon the things that divide us. I want to remind you, and myself, that whatever may be the issue of all the manifold critical, historical, ecclesiastical, political, economic problems that clamour for solution and make our life so unrestful, the foundation of God standeth sure; the things that cannot be shaken remain. As soon as we forget this, as we do forget it too often, the outlook becomes so disquieting that it is hard to keep our courage up. For it so

happens that just at a time when everything shakeable is being shaken, when all authorities and all traditions are being thrown into the melting-pot, just when more than at other times we crave for some wise and strong leadership, we are suffering from one of those mysterious eclipses of genius which often follow periods of great energy and activity. In every department of life the place of the Victorian giants is filled (it seems to me) by pygmies. As in the days of Eli, the word of the Lord is precious—there is no open vision. This state of things will pass; we shall have great men again before long; and they will have to address themselves to the great problem which is at the bottom of all lesser departmental problems—the desire of the progressive nations of the North and West to beat out for themselves a really native civilisation, which hitherto they have never enjoyed. We are still the barbarians who broke up the Roman Empire and took over what we could lift of their culture. Our religious books come from Palestine; our “humaner letters” from Athens and Rome; our whole mental furniture, except our science, is a queer assortment of miscellaneous antiques, which we wear as incongruously as an African chief decks himself in European clothes. And beneath all there is our own native moral ideal, our secular religion which we have evolved for our-

selves, which we believe in and live by—the Northern European code of honour—the ideal of a gentleman. It is a queer state of things, and we shall not see our way out till we have more genius among us than can at present be discerned. Meanwhile we have our cocksure little guides, some of whom say to us, “That is primitive, therefore it is good,” and others, “This is up-to-date, therefore it is better.” Not very wise persons any of them, I fear.

But when we turn from all these perplexing problems, and think of the spiritual life in its purest and simplest nature, what a difference we find! We have interrogated the scribes and lawyers, and their witness agrees not together. On all questions *about* religion there is the most distressing divergency. But the saints do not contradict each other. They all tell the same story. They claim to have had glimpses of the land that is very far off, and they prove that they have been there by bringing back perfectly consistent and harmonious reports of it. There never was a greater mistake than to suppose that there is no authentic information, but only subjective fancies and hallucinations, about the spiritual world. Subjective fancies betray their subjectivity by reflecting the idiosyncrasies of their creators; but in the higher religious experiences there is singularly little subjective distortion. You may take up mystical books written

in Europe, Asia, and America ; two thousand years ago and last year ; by men and women ; by Catholics and Protestants ; by philosophers and unlearned, ignorant people ; and if they were all translated into modern English, you would hardly be able to distinguish them. Christianity has never been divided up there ; wherever we find a Christian who truly prays, there we can point to a member of the true universal Church. I am not speaking, you will understand me, of trance or ecstasy ; I am simply speaking of prayer—prayer, of which the old and true definition is “the elevation of the mind and heart to God.” It is in prayer, using the word in this extended sense, that we come into immediate contact with the things that cannot be shaken. It is when we exercise this highest of our privileges that we ascend in heart and mind to the sphere of true realities, to the world which though unseen is not unknown, and of the existence of which we have a far greater certainty than we can have of the world which we perceive with our senses. Heaven is “the place of the soul” ; it is as near to our souls as this world is to our bodies ; we are created, we are redeemed, we have our conversation, our *πολίτευμα*, in it. “Poor and miserable as this life is,” says William Law, “we have all of us free access to all that is great and good and happy, and carry within ourselves a key to all the treasures which heaven has

to bestow upon us. We starve in the midst of plenty, groan under infirmities with the remedy in our own hand ; live and die without knowing and feeling anything of the One, only Good, whilst we have it in our power to know and enjoy it in as great a reality as we know and feel the power of this world over us." "For the Sun meets not the springing bud that stretches towards him with half that certainty, as God, the source of all good, communicates Himself to the soul that longs to partake of Him."

"The remedy is in our own hand." If we feel any doubt that this is so, it is for want of faith, or merely for want of practice. Recent psychology has emphasised the supreme importance of *attention*. The world which, as we think, surrounds us, the world of which we are conscious, is made up of the things we care about, the things which we choose to attend to. All the rest slips away from us unperceived. To the actor, the *ὑποκριτής*, all the world's a stage ; to the pushing, ambitious man it is a mêlée in which methods of barbarism, slightly disguised, pay best ; to the servant of Mammon it is a counting-house or a field to be exploited. To the spiritual man it is the forecourt of God's house, and he knows at all times where to find the Master. We surround ourselves with a world after our own likeness. But even when we are only beginning the struggle for an inde-

pendent spiritual life, it is not difficult to concentrate our thoughts on the great reality which we know is close to us all the time. It is not very difficult even at first, and it becomes easier and easier. There may be mistakes in method, which we shall do well to avoid; *e.g.* it is a mistake to think much about ourselves, to watch ourselves like spiritual hypochondriacs. The worst shadows that hide the Sun from us are those which we make ourselves by standing in our own light, by putting the swollen and lumpish image of the false self between the hidden man of the heart and his God. And another blunder is to practise those vain repetitions which, in spite of our Lord's express prohibition, are still frequently recommended. Far more wholesome is the advice of Jeremy Taylor: "Order your private devotions so that they become not causes of tediousness by their indiscreet length; but reduce your words into a narrower compass, still keeping all the matter, and what is cut off in the length of your prayers, supply in the earnestness of your spirit; for so nothing is lost, while the words are changed into matter, and length of time into fervency of devotion." It is not long prayers that I am advocating, but the practice of the presence of God. "The Christian," says Clement of Alexandria, "will pray in every place, but not openly to be seen of men. He prays in his

walks for recreation, in his intercourse with others, in silence, in reading, in all rational pursuits. And although he is only thinking of God in the little chamber of the soul, and calling upon his Father with silent aspirations, God is near him and with him while yet he is speaking."

I suppose we have all been worried at times by the arguments of those who tell us that prayer is "merely subjective"; that the God with whom we believe ourselves to hold converse is only a hypostatised moral ideal, or a subliminal part of our own consciousness, or the ghost of some racial memory, the pale spectre of departing primeval animism. One longs, as a student of philosophy, to join issue with the retailers of this poor stuff, to make them explain what they mean by "merely subjective," and by the subliminal consciousness, and what unanalysed conception of the self underlies this refusal to admit the soul's citizenship of the eternal world. But I have promised to eschew controversy in these addresses. I will only suggest that there may be a sort of spiritual vulgarity and Philistinism in ruling out the perfectly clear and consistent testimony of the saints. We are willing to go to school to the poets, even if nature has made us prosaic. The poets are now, I think, our chief moral teachers, as they were at Athens:—

*τοῖς μὲν γὰρ παιδαρίοισιν
ἔστι διδάσκαλος ὅστις φράζει, τοῖς ἡβῶσιν δὲ ποιηταί.*

We believe that Shakespeare, Wordsworth, and Browning have a message for us, that they can interpret nature and life in virtue of their divine gift. Why, then, should we have any doubt when we read such a passage as this from St. Augustine: "I entered the secret chamber of my soul, and beheld the light that never changes, above the eye of my soul, above my intelligence. It was altogether different from any earthly illumination. It was above me because it made me, and I was lower because I was made by it"?

Are we to set against such plain testimony the pessimistic agnosticism of a voluptuary like Omar Khayyám?—

*There was the Door to which I found no Key ;
There was the Veil through which I might not see ;
Some little talk awhile of Me and Thee
There was, and then no more of Me and Thee.*

May it not be that the door has no key because it has no lock? May it not be that the veil cannot be seen through because it has already been withdrawn? Finally, may it not be that "some little talk of Me and Thee" is *not* the appointed way to find Him whose centre is everywhere and His circumference nowhere? "In the true Light and true Love," says the author of the *Theologia Germanica*, "there neither is nor can remain any I, Me,

Thou, Thine, and the like, but that Light perceiveth and knoweth that there is a Good which is all good and above all good, and that all good things are of one substance in the One Good, and that without that One there is no good thing. Therefore, where this Light is, a man's end and aim is not this or that, Me or Thee, or the like, but only the One, who is neither I nor Thou, this nor that, but is above all I and Thou, this and that ; and in Him all Goodness is loved as one Good."

The suggestion that in prayer we only hear the echo of our own voices is ridiculous to any one who has prayed. The religious experience claims to be a direct experience of ultimate spiritual reality, in exactly the same way in which our eyes tell us that this chapel is enclosed by walls which do not exist only in our imagination. If a man chooses to be a solipsist or a subjective idealist, I do not know that we can dislodge him from his theoretical position. But most of us are content to believe our bodily eyes, and *a fortiori* we should be content to accept the evidence of the eye of the soul.

*Whoso hath felt the vision of the Highest
Cannot confound nor doubt Him nor deny ;
Yea, with one voice though thou, O world, deniest,
Stand thou on that side, for on this am I.*

*Who that one moment has the least descried Him
Dimly and faintly, hidden and afar,
Doth not despise all excellence beside Him,
Pleasures and powers that are not and that are,—
Yea, amid all men bear himself thereafter,
Smit with a solemn and a sweet surprise,
Dumb to their scorn, and turning on their laughter
Only the dominance of earnest eyes.*

These words are put by Frederic Myers into the mouth of St. Paul ; and perhaps they describe a serenity beyond the range of that stern fighter, saint and mystic though he was. Certainly for most of us they only indicate what *would* be the result of our minutes with Christ on the mount of the Transfiguration, our visions of the face of our birth in the mirror of God's word, if we were not so ready to go our ways, "the one to his farm, the other to his merchandise," and forget all that we have seen and all that we have heard. But even these exalted lines are not unreal to us ; they touch a chord in our hearts ; we know what they mean ; nay more, they remind us of what we have seen and heard ourselves. God has spoken to us all, once or twice or more often, as a man speaketh unto his friend. There have been moments in the lives of each one of us, in which the spirit's true endowments stand out plainly from its false ones, and apprise it if pursuing or the right way or the wrong way, to its triumph or undoing.

We must "cherish these best hours of the mind," as Bacon says, and not let them slip from us. We shall find them very helpful in moments of doubt and despondency.

*If e'er, when faith had fallen asleep,
I heard a voice, "Believe no more,"
And heard an ever-breaking shore
That tumbled in the godless deep ;
A warmth within the breast would melt
The freezing reason's colder part,
And like a man in wrath the heart
Stood up and answer'd, "I have felt."*

Let us try to-night and to-morrow to remember what we felt when God was nearest to us. Let us try to link up the prayers which we then prayed with those that we shall pray now. Let us ask Him to forgive us for having been so shamefully disobedient in the past to the heavenly vision. Whose fault is it if now we feel dry and cold? Have we set God always before us? Have we waited and wished for another glimpse of His presence? Alas, the freshest years of our life are gone, frittered away to a large extent. Who shall restore to us the years that the locust hath eaten, the caterpillar and the palmer-worm—all the ignoble little pests that have laid waste our heritage?

It is sad work turning over these back pages, in order to recall more vividly our lost opportunities. But it is a salutary exercise, parti-

cularly when we are disposed to grumble that God hides His face from us. It is we that are in hiding from Him ; we are abroad, He is at home. If we can bear to penetrate into the inner chambers of the soul, there we shall find Him, there in that soul-centre where the eternal spark burns ever unquenched, where lives that germ of the divine nature which never consents to sin. We cannot always walk by its light ; there are times when all the sky seems overcast and no light gleams within. But that darkness is not likely, I hope, to come upon us to-morrow. We shall find some comfort and help in our prayers before we go. In this first address I merely want to remind you that the communion of the soul with God is an absolutely certain fact of experience, which needs no philosophical argument and no historical proof. "The foundation of God standeth sure ; the Lord knoweth, and is known by, them that are His." "I know my sheep, and am known of mine." "For," in the words of the medieval English saint Julian of Norwich, "the goodness of God is the highest prayer, and cometh down to the lowest part of our need. It quickeneth our soul and bringeth it on life, and maketh it for to waxen in grace and virtue. It is nearest in nature and readiest in grace ; for it *is* the same grace that the soul seeketh, and ever shall seek till we know verily that He hath us all in Himself enclosed."

II

SUNDAY MORNING

THERE are several aspects under which the Holy Communion, in which we were privileged to join together this morning, may be considered. But first and foremost, because here we have our Lord's own words about it, it is the Sacrament in and by which we are to remember Him, and in remembering to be united to Him. The culmination of the life of prayer is the reception of the life of God within us, and this is the mystery of the Eucharist. Whether or not it be true, as the mystics of all ages have taught, and as I assumed yesterday, that there is a "soul-centre" which is as it were the natural point of contact with the Divine, an unquenchable spark from the altar in heaven, a principle which does not and cannot consent to sin, and which, as William Law says, "is so infinite that nothing can satisfy it, or give it any rest, but the infinity of God," at any rate in this sacrament the "medicine of immortality" is offered us, and offered in the name and through

the mediation of Jesus Christ. "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life." You may have noticed yesterday evening that I hardly mentioned the name of Christ, and you may have doubted whether it was Christian prayer, and fellowship with Christ, that I was advocating, or only a deep but undefined religious sentiment. If I omitted the name of our Redeemer yesterday, it was not because I did not think of Him. I said nothing about the Holy Spirit either, though it must have been plain that without belief in the Holy Spirit such confidence as I then expressed in the validity of our intuitions would have been quite unjustifiable. I did not differentiate the Persons of the Trinity, because I believe that in the life of devotion, in the deepest religious experience, it is impossible to differentiate them. You will remember how St. Paul habitually ascribes the same attributes, or at any rate the same offices in relation to the human soul, to God, Christ, the Spirit of God, and the Spirit of Christ. "The Lord is the Spirit," he says once. St. Basil, without referring to St. Paul, notices the fact. "In worship," he says, "the Holy Spirit is inseparable from the Father and the Son. For if we are separated from Him, we cannot worship at all; and if we are in Him, we can by no means separate Him from God, any more than we can separate the light from the

things which it reveals ; for it is impossible to see the image of the invisible God, except by the illumination of the Spirit."

Nevertheless, the doctrine of the Trinity, the "undivided Trinity," is an essential part of our *lex orandi* as well as of our *lex credendi*. When we receive the Holy Communion, we express our belief that the mysterious Divine presence, of which we are conscious in prayer (using, once more, the word prayer of all communings of the soul with the unseen spiritual world)—that this mysterious Divine presence is not only God, or the Spirit of God, but "the Spirit of *Jesus*," to use a phrase which the Revised Version has restored to our New Testament. We are identifying the living well-spring of our faith, the source of our hope and our happiness, the guide and inspirer of our lives, with a historical character who lived nearly two thousand years ago.

Here we find ourselves at once plunged into the controversial atmosphere from which I promised to hold aloof. I do not wish to break my promise, least of all in speaking of the Holy Communion. I am well aware that in making this affirmation we are leaving the secure ground of intuitive certainty ; we are making assertions which from the nature of the case cannot be proved. For of course no evidence could *prove* Jesus of Nazareth to be

God ; nor can any authority, however venerable, compel us to declare that to be certain which no evidence could possibly establish. All we can say is that the belief, on the strength of which we meet at the Lord's table, has, when accepted, all the marks of truth. The evidence for it is as good as, in the circumstances, it could be. It accounts for unquestioned facts. It satisfies us : it gives us a sense of joy and contentment, such as we only have when we are hitting the mark, whether in thought or practice ; it expands and enriches our whole experience, and gives us the key to some of life's mysteries which (unlike the central religious experience of which I spoke yesterday) do require a key to unlock them. This is enough, I think : at any rate it is enough for me.

But since many Christians feel so acutely the danger of building their religion on a foundation the soundness of which they cannot test with thoroughness, that they are trying (oblivious of St. Paul's warning) to build on some other foundation, such as the pure mystical experience independent of the Christian revelation, or the life-history of the institutional Church, or of some branch of it which they consider to have kept in the main stream of Christian development, or on the moral and spiritual ideal which, as they say, was first realised and manifested in the human life of Jesus Christ, I feel bound

to explain why I consider the maintenance of the link with the historical Christ of immense importance for our spiritual life.

In the first place, if Christ was God as well as man, He has revealed to us what the character of God is, and not only what the character of man ought to be. John Stuart Mill's famous protest: "I will call no being good who is not what I mean by good when I apply the word to my fellow-creatures," is perfectly justified. We cannot, or at least we ought not, to worship any Being who is not good in the ordinary acceptation of the term. The Incarnation is a proclamation that "the All-great is the All-loving too"—a doctrine which few, I think, accept who do not believe in the Incarnation of the Son of God in Christ. And if, with the Church of the Creeds and Fathers, we accept something like the Logos-doctrine already held by St. Paul and briefly summarised by St. John, we have the most inspiring thought that the laws of the universe, in their deepest meaning, are the expression of the character of the creating and sustaining Word who became flesh and tabernacled among us in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. I need not dwell on the consecration of the whole of nature which follows from this belief; on the final repudiation of that unfortunate dualism between the natural and supernatural which

has introduced chaos into both spheres, natural and spiritual alike; on the sanction which it gives to the pursuits of poetry, art, and science, as being each, in their different ways, a priestly and prophetic office, revealing to us the God whom we know in our hearts as the Good, under His other attributes of the True and the Beautiful. The world is good, for God the Word made it; but it can be made better, for He came to redeem it. And His redeeming, transforming work did not come to an end when He left the earth; we are living under the dispensation which then began, a dispensation of progressive enlightenment and steady realisation of a great purpose—the achievement of a theophany in redeemed humanity itself.

There is another consideration which makes the orthodox Christology precious to me. It illustrates the extreme patience with which God works. The divine in humanity is, it appears, a leaven which very slowly transforms the whole lump, and is not less divine because it operates very slowly. The Incarnation, though in one sense it came in the fullness of time, was in another sense very premature. Not only was Christ rejected by the large majority of His own contemporaries, but His message was soon so swallowed up in the three measures of meal that it was to all appearance almost lost. We cannot suppose that the forms

which Christianity has so far assumed—Jewish-Christian Messianism, the paganised Christianity of Western Catholicism, the fossilised Christianity of the East, the disrupted and fissiparous Christianity of the North—are any better than caricatures of what Christ meant His Church to be.

And yet our Lord, it appears, calmly and deliberately acquiesced in the slowness of the process. He rejected all compromising alliances, and virtually said, My message can wait, twenty thousand years if need be, till the heaven has really penetrated the lump. If this is not the inner meaning of the three temptations of Christ, I know not what meaning to give them. First, Christ will not conquer the world by commanding stones to be made bread; He will not make His way to men's hearts through their stomachs, or give His countenance to Platonic Republics or Socialistic Utopias. Secondly, He will, as the Head of His Church, work no miracles. Supernaturalism, thaumaturgy, true or false, is a short cut to success which He will not take. The Christian is to conquer nature only by studying and obeying her. Thirdly, He will use no force, no fraud, no devil's engines of any kind, to advance His kingdom. He will not even "forbid" rival teachers, if they teach the truth. Let others scheme, and forge documents, and persecute,

and flatter the strongest powers in the state—whether the strongest be the “*vultus instantis tyranni*” or the “*civium ardor prava iubentium*.” He will do none of these things. He will wait patiently till the leaven has done its work. And this, if we believe that Christ is God, must be the only method of working for and with God which God approves. He who took a million years to mould a block of old red sandstone, is willing to take a good many thousand years to mould humanity into His own likeness. The practical application of this lesson is too obvious to need many words; it is just this: Play no tricks and cut no knots.

Thirdly, the great message of the *Cross* stands or falls with the divinity of Christ. Is it not the truth that all the rivals of Christianity fail just here? All the religious philosophies of antiquity, it seems to me, shrink, in the last resort, from grasping the nettle of suffering quite firmly. They all want to make us invulnerable, somehow. There must always be a back-door of escape if the ills of life become too overpowering. Either defiant resistance, or suicide, or complete detachment, is recommended. By some means or other, the man himself must be rescued from circumstance, he must provide himself with a magic impenetrable armour. And *therefore*, the sting of pain is never drawn. The good news of Christianity is that suffering is itself divine.

It is not foreign to the experience of God Himself. "In all their affliction He was afflicted." "Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." "If thou be the Son of God," said His enemies, "come down from the Cross." No; not while any man remains unredeemed. The divine suffering is not an episode, but a revelation. It is the necessary form which divine love takes, when it is brought into contact with evil. To overcome evil with good means to suffer unjustly and willingly.

It is the blasphemy of "Christian Science" and kindred movements to deny the Cross. And in our soft, self-indulgent age it is, shamefully, felt to be a greater difficulty in the way of belief in God that men should suffer than that men should sin. This timid, pain-dreading temper is thoroughly unchristian. It is still unchristian when, as often happens to good people nowadays, they are idealists in their devotions and in their philosophy, but materialists in their charities and their politics. I believe that one reason of this is that we imagine other people's sufferings to be greater than they are, and so we are able to bear our own misfortunes with more faith and courage than those of our friends, or those of the very poor, who are often only too happy in their reckless enjoyment of each day as it comes. This temper necessarily leads to pessimism, since no amount of protestation that

"it doesn't hurt," and no amount of philanthropy, can remove the stubborn fact that pain and sorrow and disappointment are bound up with the other laws of human life, and that we must bear them, whether we like it or not. "*Ducunt volentem fata, nolentem trahunt.*"

It is not only, nor chiefly, in teaching us how to bear unavoidable misfortunes that the lesson of the Cross is so absolutely essential. It reminds us that there are losses which have to be deliberately incurred. Let none of us delude himself by supposing that honesty is always the best policy. It is not. It is ridiculous to deny that a man whose whole energies are bent upon his own advancement, is more likely to secure his end than the man who seeks first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. The world belongs to those who think and act with it, who keep a finger on its pulse. The way to be successful is to give the public exactly what it wants, and about ten per cent. more of it than it expects. It is indeed astonishing with how little wisdom mankind can be governed, when that little wisdom is their own. Well, are we willing to take a back seat, are we content to see ourselves passed by men whom we could shoulder aside if we chose and not to envy or dislike them, for the sake of Christ and the ideal that He has revealed to us? That is what the Cross mainly means for some of us, and it

hits us rather hard, I am afraid. But it is the supreme test whether we really believe in what we profess. If we keep in the background of our minds some such thoughts as these: "Disinterestedness is always recognised in the long run. The pushing schemer and adroit time-server may succeed for a time; but unassuming merit (our own chief characteristic) comes to its own at last," we are making just the same mistake as the old philosophers of whom I spoke. We are trusting to a back-door of escape; we are shirking the offence of the Cross. If we are ever tempted to indulge in such thoughts, let us think of our *God* upon the Cross, and be ashamed. An ambitious nature will hardly be tamed by anything except the thought of Calvary.

It is with this divine self-sacrifice that we have just, by a solemn act, incorporated ourselves anew. Let us think, with God's help this morning, with what kind of life and with what kind of death we have prayed to be united as "very members incorporate."

III

SUNDAY AFTERNOON

I HAVE set before you two great and fundamental truths. First, that the communion of the soul with God is an established fact, a fact more certain and better established than any of the things which we are accustomed to speak of as facts, because those are particular, contingent facts, relative to and conditioned by the whole body of fact which constitutes the world's history, while this is immediate and absolute truth, resting on the bed-rock of eternal reality. And secondly, that Jesus Christ has revealed the nature and character of our heavenly Father, the creator of this world in which we live ; has revealed that nature and character to be such as we could not, in the absence of that revelation, have assumed it to be ; but now that we have that revelation, we can progressively verify its truth for ourselves by living as if we knew it to be true, and finding that all along the line our experience is what it would be if the revelation were true. The main content of this revelation of the nature and

character of God is that God is our Father, wise, patient, and loving ; and that in His love for His children He has Himself accepted, and in a sense submitted Himself to, the great law of sacrifice, of gain through pain, of life through death, which we see to be the law of the visible universe.

We have then two guides, which are yet not two but one. We have the spiritual faculty, that gift which, as Plotinus says, all possess but few use, the privilege of communion with God in prayer ; and we have "the mind of Christ" as revealed in the records of His earthly life. These are not two, but one ; for the witness of the Spirit is behind both. The *scala perfectionis* of the mystics is the Christ-life developing itself in the inner man ; and if we find that some who knew not the source of their happiness have trodden the same path and reached the same goal, we in the twentieth century shall not be less enlightened than Justin Martyr in the second, who said that those who before Christ lived under the guidance of the divine Word were Christians, though they were not accounted as such by men.

*Many a man for Christes love
Was martyred in Romaine,
Before ever Christendom was known there
Or ever cross honoured.*

In my fourth and concluding Address I shall have something to say about the pilgrim-road

as described for us by those who have trodden it. But believing as I do from the bottom of my heart that our spiritual life in all its stages is informed and guided by the objectively real presence of Christ within us, by an actual continuation of the work which was begun when He was visibly present among His disciples in Galilee, I wish first to direct your thoughts to the teaching and example of the historical Christ, as the norm and standard of our prayer-life, the one true *lex orandi* for His followers. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." "I think also," said St. Paul, "that I have the mind of Christ." Can we say that? There is no more important question that we can put to ourselves.

I know well how sketchy and inadequate—how one-sided in all probability—must be any attempt of mine to state the essential features of "the mind of Christ." Nevertheless I feel that I must try. For Christ is the one foundation: "other foundation can no man lay, save that which is laid, even Christ"; that is to say, if any man builds on another foundation, it is not a Christian Church that he is building. But this is not all. All the imposing but dishonest structures that have been built on this foundation, and which are now tottering and crumbling before our eyes—walls daubed with untempered mortar, roofs of hay and stubble—are doomed

because the builders have forgotten that the Christian Church was intended to grow up *into* Christ in all things, not out of Christ into something radically different.

The life of Christ was throughout a life of prayer. Not only did He love to spend many hours in lonely communing with His Father, on the mountain-tops which He was perhaps the first to love, and to choose for this purpose, but His whole life was spent in habitual realisation of God's presence. The word "Abba" seems to have been constantly on His lips, so that it became one of the watchwords of the Christian community, who loved to preserve it in the tender Aramaic form, the sound of which those who had been with Jesus could never forget. In Him every joy became spontaneously a thanksgiving, every pain an act of resignation. His view of the world was theocentric to a degree which none since has attained. None but He could repeat with perfect truthfulness the words of the Psalmist : "I have set God always before me ; He is on my right hand, therefore I cannot fall. Therefore my heart was glad and my glory rejoiced ; my flesh also shall rest in hope." This unbroken consciousness of the presence of God issued in an utter simplicity and singleness of aim which, as an ideal, is the beginning and end of Christian ethics. "By two wings," says Thomas à Kempis, "man is raised above the earth, by

simplicity and purity. Simplicity must be in the motive, purity in the affection; simplicity aims at God, purity embraces and tastes Him." It also carried with it that transvaluation of all values—that drastic re-valuation of human goods and ills—which constitutes the sharp severance between Christianity and "the world." Life is completely transformed in the light of our divine sonship and heavenly citizenship. It has sometimes been said that the theologians of our generation have given too much prominence to the Fatherhood of God as the centre of Christ's revelation. I do not wish to make it more central than it really is in the Gospels. But surely it is not accidental that "Father" is the first word of the Lord's Prayer. Nothing else is quite so important as what we think of God in His relations to mankind. That God made us, loves us, educates and disciplines us, demands our love and obedience—filial love and filial obedience, that He has destined an inheritance for us in His own home—all these things, which follow necessarily and naturally from the word Father, are a very large part of Christianity. They thrust out a great many unworthy notions of God, which belong properly to the lower religions, but which are by no means dead yet. A father does not reward or punish arbitrarily; he is not cruel or unjust; God does not treat His children in a way which would be considered

harsh in an earthly parent. He is not indifferent to our welfare ; He is grieved if we behave ill, and rejoices if we try to please Him. "Father" is a word of blissful emancipation in religion. In place of the servile fear and helpless dread which in the lower religions hang like a dark cloud over human life, "*horribili super aspectu mortalibus instans*," we have the happy feeling of "confidence towards God," not unmixed with awe and fear, for we know that we have sinned against Him, and mercy may be sterner than justice, but with an absolute security against injustice and vindictiveness. And we have the joy of immediate access. No father ever appointed intermediaries to come between himself and his children. The attitude of a child to his father is wholly different from the attitude of a subject to an Eastern king. We need not employ artifices in approaching God. We need not seek for *mollia tempora fandi*, we need not employ the good offices of courtiers, on earth or in heaven. We need not bring offerings to propitiate Him, nor use language of grovelling self-abasement or flattery in our requests to Him. Our Lord encouraged a very simple, fearless, and direct mode of address to the Father in prayer. We are to pray as He prayed, in His name, that is to say, in His spirit. Such prayers are sure to be in accordance with the will of the Father, and therefore cannot fail of being

granted. Or if, like our Lord's own prayer in Gethsemane, or St. Paul's prayer to be delivered from the "stake in the flesh," they are not granted directly, "sufficient strength" is given instead. Remember the fine words of George Meredith: "He who rises from his knees a better man, his prayer has been granted." "If we, being evil, know how to give good things to our children, how much more will our Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" "Our Father." It is, as Tyrrell says, the voice of all humanity, the voice of all creation, the blended voices of the Benedicite, that lift to heaven that cry "which Christ Himself hath taught us."

And the kingdom of God. I know what a thorny question this is from the critical point of view. But this at least we may say with confidence. Jesus taught His disciples to believe in the assured triumph of goodness and righteousness, to believe in it with an intensity which puzzled and confused themselves. He implanted in them a conviction which surged up and flooded the whole area of their thoughts and ideas. They tried to take stock of it, to account for it, to co-ordinate it with their other beliefs. And they could only justify their strange buoyancy and hopefulness, their carelessness of earthly vicissitudes, their contempt for suffering and death itself, by supposing that

they had been promised a share in some startling miraculous deliverance in the near future. But the light which cast these flickering shadows on the future was within them. Christ kindled it in their hearts ; the shadows which it cast were those of their own presuppositions.

Christ was accustomed to speak of "the heart" (*καρδια*) as the seat of the conscious spiritual activity of man. The "heart," in His language and that of His contemporaries, does not at all mean the seat of the affections as distinguished from the will and thought ; it means the whole inner man. In the heart reside the reasoning powers ; out of it proceed bad things as well as good—all the things that defile a man as well as all the things that purify him. It is the seat of doubt, as well as of trust in God. It is the receptacle of man's "treasure," that is to say, the goods on which his thoughts and desires chiefly dwell. God knows the heart, and judges according to the state of the heart. Purity of heart is the condition of seeing God ; and therefore it is useless to condemn and avoid overt acts of sin, without penetrating to the root of bitterness in the heart. It is impossible to exaggerate the emphasis which Christ lays on the right direction of the affections and will, or the indifference with which He views all actions which do not express character. The great saying whereby, as the evangelist says, He

"made all meats clean," can only be understood by us as it was meant to be understood if in the place of "meats" we put the most sacred ceremonial ordinances of our own religion. "To eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man." Think what that means, *mutatis mutandis*. Nevertheless, the good Christian will never be guilty of irreverence or carelessness, nor will he neglect the ordinances of the religious society to which he belongs. Formality is the evil, not form, nor even formulas. The pious Quaker, and those who agree with him about the uselessness of external ceremonies, may be recommended to ponder the following wise saying of Heinrich Suso: "He who can see the inward in the outward, to him the inward is more inward than to him who can only see the inward in the inward." Nothing that goes into the mouth can either cleanse or defile; but most justly do we venerate the sacrament of that heavenly food which, because it is heavenly, is not given through our bodily organs, but to the inner man who is renewed day by day, even when our outer man is perishing in the order of nature.

The kingdom of God on earth, which has its throne in the heart of man,¹ is sharply separated from the kingdom of the prince of this world; and this cleavage runs through all the closely

¹ ὁ θρόνος τῆς Θεότητος ὁ νοῦς ἐστὶν ἡμῶν.—MACARIUS

knit fabric of our social life. There are two kingdoms—that of the world, that is to say, of human society organising itself apart from God, a system which is bound together by a network of interlacing bad qualities, co-operative guilt with limited liability, making it very difficult in some cases to act justly and honourably; and the kingdom of God, which is bound together by an unseen network of interlacing good qualities, the handiwork of the unknown and unrecognised saviours of society. When we are tempted, as we often are if we engage in practical work of any kind involving the management of men, to *use* the world, to take advantage of and calculate upon the moral weaknesses which we know to exist in others, let us remember that we cannot do this without incurring moral responsibility for the evil which we take up into our own schemes. The whole complex system of evil depends on the co-operation of many respectable people. It is a vast grinding machine, which would be quickly thrown out of gear if there were more people with stiff backbones and sensitive consciences.

Thus the kingdom of God, as preached by Christ, necessarily has a social aspect, based paradoxically on that moral individualism which is a direct product of Christianity. I mean the reverence for each individual soul which makes it intolerable that any one should be morally

sacrificed, that any life should be remorselessly used up and flung aside.

A few words in conclusion about the Christian temper. The great commandment of love condemns not only Pharisaic externalism but Stoic benevolence. "It is only weak eyes," says Seneca, "which weep in sympathy." That is the spirit of Pagan philosophical charity: it is benevolence without pity. Now take by way of contrast these words from Clement of Alexandria. "The new life is doing good for love's sake. He who shows pity ought not to know that he is doing so. When he does good by instinctive habit (*ἐν ἔξει*), he will be imitating the nature of good." The Christian does good as the sun shines, unconsciously. "For this reason, since God breathed into man, there has always been a sort of charm (*φίλτρον*) in him." So "the new people" are always happy, always in spring-time. "The Church is the only thing in the world that always rejoices."

Next to love comes love's sister, joy. A distinguished unbeliever once said, "Why is it that all the Christians whom I meet look melancholy?" To which the reply was, "The sight of you, Mr. B., would make any Christian melancholy." But this retort does not answer a charge which ought never to be brought against Christians with any shadow of truth.

Christ certainly meant us to be happy, happier than any other people. Do not let us make the common blunder of supposing that such a moral rigorism as that of Kant, which holds out no promises of happiness, is something higher than Christianity, which does promise us happiness, both here and hereafter. Mere obedience to law, for the sake of obedience, and without regard to consequences, is not a possible motive for a reasonable being. Happiness is our being's end and aim ; but it is the happiness of achieving the end for which we were made, of finishing the work which God gave us to do. Christian joy is a happiness which has passed through and overcome suffering, and has attained to life through the gate of death. There are real deaths to die, in the spiritual as well as in the natural order. "He who wishes to save his soul shall lose it, and he who is willing to lose his soul for my sake shall find it." The soul, life, $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$, is the life of the surface-consciousness, the empirical Ego. This we must always be willing to mortify and disown, when higher spiritual opportunities are offered to us. Prayer always lifts us above the psychic life, with its self-centredness and distractions. And is it not a matter of experience, that whenever we feel ourselves lifted above this psychic life—whenever we can put aside that psychic classification of experience into "things which help

me" and "things which thwart me"—whenever we are able for a time to view things objectively, impersonally, theocentrically, we feel at once that we are breathing a larger and more wholesome air, and that a glow of health and joy permeates our whole being?

The life of prayer is the Christ-life, the life of which Christ is at once the source, the dynamic, and the goal. It is the life which He lived on earth, and which He continues to live in the hearts of Christians. It may be our life if we will. Do not let us be afraid that our practical usefulness will suffer if we think too much of God and too little of our work. The best teacher is he who can say: "For their sakes I consecrate or sanctify myself." Religion is caught rather than taught; it is the religious teacher, not the religious lesson, that helps the pupil to believe. Prayer naturally, spontaneously, issues in action. Action is the normal completion of the act of will which begins as prayer. That action is not always external, but it is always some kind of effective energy. The true Christian will never be tempted to imitate the "Hermit" of Parnell's poem, of whom it was said, "Prayer all his business, all his pleasure praise"; for he would soon find that such prayers and praises are a very poor sort of devotion, and that he who so lives is on the way to be a very poor sort of saint.

The true scholar who, as has been said, "goes to his desk as to an altar," will do his work better, not worse, than he who does not consecrate his daily work by prayer.

Yes, this has been a very sketchy delineation of "the mind of Christ." But you will be able to supplement it for yourselves. Think of love, joy, peace—*ἀγάπη, χαρὰ, εἰρήνη*—all new words, quite new, as moral virtues, to the Greek language. Think of these as the three things which Christ lived and loved. And set against them, as the three things which our Master hated, acting or unreality, hard-heartedness, and worldliness. These contrasted triplets will bring us near to the heart of Christianity.

IV

SUNDAY EVENING

IN this concluding Address I wish to say a little more about the pure religious experience, as it lives and develops in the life of prayer. It is, I think, indisputable that the centre of gravity in religion is shifting from authority to experience; that is surely the direction in which we are moving, in spite of certain backward currents such as we should expect to find in periods of change. If I may venture on a very broad generalisation, the old deductive method of arriving at religious truth has been displaced by an inductive method. The old plan was to begin with revealed truth or general law—these being regarded as certain, and to argue down from these to particulars. The process was logical, not experimental, and when particular facts, known empirically, would not conform to the revealed truth or the universal law, these, and not the supposed revelation or the supposed universal law, were discredited. It was in this way that the whole dogmatic

system of Scholasticism was built up ; and if a Galileo or a Bruno promulgated views which contradicted truths supernaturally guaranteed, it was argued that their observation of phenomena must be at fault. Since Bacon, the inductive scientific method, which proceeds by experiment rather than by logic, has been driving scholasticism out of nearly every department of intellectual activity. Physical science has long been emancipated ; and we are now witnessing the liberation of other studies which involve all the outworks of the religious citadel. We are in the middle of great changes, and it is inevitable that much disquiet and disturbance should be caused ; but the experiential foundation—which is not new, but older than the institutional authorities which are now collapsing—is far firmer than the old ; and when the period of transition is over, we shall discover how little we have lost and how much we have gained. The old system depended on the unquestioned certainty of the authority which it began by assuming ; divine, absolute, infallible authority was the major premiss of the argument. But such an authority, being *ex hypothesi* external, can never be a secure basis for deductive reasoning. Scholasticism is an admirably constructed house built on sand. But we who believe that Christ came to inaugurate the religion of the Spirit need no such perilous

assumption. We are content with a progressive dynamic revelation, always true to "the mind of Christ." The Spirit of Christ will lead us into all truth, for the Incarnation was a real taking of the manhood into God. "Christ became human that we might be divine," as the Greek Fathers were not afraid to say. The spiritual life is a grand experiment which ends in an experience; but it is not merely a leap in the dark; throughout its whole course there is a progressive verification of its fundamental hypothesis, which makes us quite sure that we are on the right road. It is much like climbing a mountain. We are too much occupied with finding our way and securing footholds to think much about the elevation which we have reached; but from time to time we observe that we are nearer the summit, by the larger prospect which has opened around us. For the fuller revelation we look forward. Our world is still in the making, and we are in the making too. We look to the "*Christus futurus*" to interpret the Christ of past history, and to the *homo futurus* to show us what is the meaning of human personality.

The testimony of experience is not merely individual. We have the great cloud of witnessess, the utterances and biographies of God's saints. Many religious books and many biographies are worthless, because insincere; but

there is a considerable body of perfectly trustworthy material, which is of inestimable value in illuminating the dark corners of the inner life. In addressing teachers of my own and a younger generation, I am sure I need not expatiate on the immense importance of a knowledge of religious psychology. It will soon, I hope, be a commonplace to say that a religious teacher cannot mediate between a hungry soul and its better, future self, or between man and God, who does not know something of the laws of spiritual evolution. The study of normal (rather than abnormal) psychology, and of good biography, will be of the greatest service to us both in dealing with our own characters and those of our pupils.

And yet there is a sense in which such intuitions are not transferable. St. Bernard's motto, "My secret to myself," is true, not because the saint will not communicate the very best that God has shown to him, but because he cannot. Originality—uniqueness—is the characteristic of all religious experience. "No man may deliver his brother"; he can only assure him that he has seen what he has seen, and point out the way up the holy mount. It is instructive to find, not once only, in the middle of Plotinus' difficult and closely reasoned dialectic, a sudden appeal to direct experience. "He who has seen it knows what I mean." He can set

us on the right road, as he says, but we must climb it for ourselves. William Blake tells us the same in his cryptic language :—

*I give you the end of a golden string ;
Only wind it into a ball ;
It will lead you in at heaven's gate,
Built in Jerusalem's wall.*

What, I think, we have to realise, as a certain and most important truth, is that the soul of man is a microcosm, having affinities with all grades of being from the highest to the lowest ; and that the rank of the individual soul, of our own self, our personality, is determined by the things we are interested in, by the things we love. What we love, that we see ; and what we see, that we are. There is no escape from this law. Where our treasure is, there will our heart be also. It is of no use to fill our days with work which we consider useful, if the moment that the tension is relaxed our minds fly spontaneously to thoughts of money, ambition, self-indulgence, or some favourite frivolity. The mind is dyed the colour of its thoughts, its leisure thoughts ; as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. St. Paul's hymn in praise of the love without which faith and hope are vain gets a new meaning when we think of it in connection with this law. It goes very much deeper than injunctions to kindness, charity, and benevolence. What is it that we *love* ? In what

sphere are we really at home? Do all our actions, words, and thoughts spring from one steady central interest, which warms our faith and illuminates our hope? It is no accident that in the Sermon on the Mount the words "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" are followed immediately by "The light of the body is the eye. If your eye be single, your whole body shall be full of light." We need above all things to simplify our religion and our inner life generally. Christianity has become too complex a thing, too much encumbered with alien accretions, some of which belong by rights to the lower religions, and some do not belong to religion at all. We want to separate the essential from the non-essential, to concentrate our faith upon the pure God-consciousness, the eternal world which to Christ was so much nearer and more real than the world of external objects. And we want to simplify our own inner life, concentrating all our faculties on the things that really matter. When the soul loses itself, it is because it is immersed in a multiplicity of petty and discordant interests, which have their centre in the life of the moment. Do not misunderstand me. I am not advocating that pitiful impoverishment of experience by which some have sought to gain simplicity. The opposite, the contradiction of simplicity, is not richness and variety of

content, but incoherence and discord. It is at best a *pis aller* when we have to amputate, to cast away from us, some innocent interest which we are unable to assimilate and co-ordinate. And yet—when we are tempted to talk glibly about the mistake of asceticism—is not the popular language about “inner detachment” a great snare? We are not very ready to credit our neighbours with being “inwardly detached” from the good things of this world which they appear to us to have schemed to obtain, and to enjoy now that they have obtained them. It is my own conviction that a deliberate simplification of our outward life is often a very great help towards that inner simplification of which it may be a kind of symbol. Not every one can warm both hands before the fire of life without scorching himself in the process. I am speaking now of avoidable complications, of the *μέριμναι βιωτικά* which to some extent we can multiply or reduce as we choose. As runners, we wish to lay aside every *weight*. Do our superfluities invigorate us in body and mind, or do they clog and impede us? Simplicity redeems from waste not only money but time, some of our own and more of other people's. It is not a comfortable thought that we often use up the product of a long day's work in an hour, and on something which does us no real good at all!

We need not be much distressed at the

apparent dissipation of our energies caused directly by our work, which leaves us so little time to possess our souls. Much time is not required for the practice of the presence of God, after that practice has once become a habit. The habit once formed, our work, however exacting, will help rather than hinder; it will bring fuel to the fire upon the altar. It is the law of spiritual development that the beginning and the end should be simple, the middle stages complex. This observation was made by Proclus, and it was said before him, in rather different words, by Clement of Alexandria. τὰ ἄκρα οὐ διδάσκεται, the two extremes, the first stage, which is faith, and the final fruition, which is love, cannot be taught or learned. The first is a brave venture, which at the same time is a divine gift, for faith is only the human side of grace; and the last is God Himself. In giving us love, He gives us Himself. All that comes in between; purification or discipline, and knowledge—all the intermediate things which constitute our active life in the world—these are matters to be experienced and worked out; these are the appointed means to the higher simplicity, which shines white because it *includes* all the colours, all the rich variety of the πολυποίκιλος σοφία τοῦ θεοῦ.

I know it is hard not to groan over the toll that professional work takes from life. Some

overworked schoolmaster among you may be saying to himself: "We have to limit ourselves, to specialise till we are only sections of men; how can our religious experience be other than cramped and distorted? What kind of truth can reveal itself to a mill-horse moving slowly round and round as it turns a wheel?"

Well, I believe that this segmentation of humanity, which perhaps may some day be made less oppressive than it is now, injures culture more than religion. All honest work, thoroughly performed, has a universal quality about it which is wholly lost to the smatterer and dilettante. God, after all, is very near to us, whatever we are doing; and, as the old philosophers averred, he is *in omnibus totus*. He is not divided into morsels. And let me say one thing, parenthetically but emphatically, for it is a most salutary caution to men of our profession. The blessing which his work brings to a man depends hardly at all on the subject on which he is working, and almost entirely on the spirit in which the work is done. There is, I am afraid, a sort of snobbery, very common among clergymen, scholars, and teachers. They talk of their "sacred profession," their "noble calling," and so forth. The assumption is that work which is connected with sacred or noble things is itself sacred or noble work. I know of no worse snare than

this idea. My housemaid when she sweeps my study does nobler work than I do when I am writing a sermon or lecture, if, as is likely enough, she does her work more conscientiously than I do. We have therefore small reason to congratulate ourselves if our work is concerned with some big subject, or to commiserate ourselves if it seems to be on a small scale. There is no reason to suppose that if we could choose our own employment during the eight or ten hours a day which are taken up by our professional labours, we should use our time more profitably for our soul's health than we do now. The man who does his work heartily, as unto the Lord, is praying, as the old proverb says truly. This is no doubt the reason why the conscientious layman, who is not consciously a religious man, is so often, in all essentials, as good or a better Christian than the average cleric. If he has a disinterested ideal in his work; if he does it not with eye-service, as a man-pleaser; if it is a very small thing to him how he is judged by man's judgment; he prays, though he knows it not, and such prayer is more acceptable to God than any number of professional, self-conscious, or self-seeking devotions. Nevertheless, it is difficult to maintain a high standard of work without spiritual pride, unless one believes in God and kneels often at His feet.

For many of us, the main avenue by which we approach God is not our professional work, but our home life, or our friendships. "Friendships," says one of our best living spiritual guides,¹ "are portals into the apprehension of the solidarity of the race, and of the true relations of God to each one of us; grand educations they seem to me. . . . If our friendships are in God's name, that is, if they be in the plane of our *true* nature, then they will be complete. They must be looked on as gifts of God, not flung to the devil; pearls that must not be cast to the swine; if we thus look upon friendships as embedded in the good providence of God, then we shall neither be withered by the want of them, nor intoxicated by the misuse of them, but on the contrary shall become stronger in the Lord, and in the power of His might, through their ministration. . . . They are the jewels of the kingdom of God, and must be 'set' by us as in the providence of God to be treasured in His wisdom and power. No friendship that is worthy of the name will be found to have been less than necessary for the perfection of the friendship of the whole body of mankind in and with the Lord." All human love is a holy thing, the holiest thing in our experience. It is the chief mode of initiation into the mysteries of the divine life,

¹ R. W. Corbet.

the most direct point of contact with the nature of our Creator. "He prayeth best who loveth best." Pure affection "abides" in a sense in which nothing else abides. It is rooted in the eternal, and cannot be destroyed by any of the changes and chances of mortal life. It is a relation between immortal spirits, which in the eternal world are united together solely by likeness of nature; so that death not only makes no break in the ties of pure affection, but liberates it from adventitious obstacles which at present only impede its free action and dull its radiance. When we know even as we are known, we shall know our friends and be known by them, to a degree which we cannot even imagine now. In that better world, as Plotinus says, "All is transparent: no shadow there obstructs the view; all spirits see each other and penetrate each other to the depths. Light is recognised by light. Every spirit comprehends in itself the whole world of spirits, and beholds it in its entirety in every spirit. All things there are everywhere; everything is all, and all is each, and infinite is the glory. There every one is great; for in heaven the small also is great. There are the sun and the stars. Each star is the sun and all the stars; each luminary shines with its own light and reflects the light of all the rest. There reign pure movement and pure repose; . . . there beauty

is wholly beautiful, and everything is in its right place, informed and enveloped by the divine Spirit which is its origin, its principle, and its true being."

In all true human affection there is the desire to give, to understand, and to receive. There is no niggardliness, no pride, and no reserve. We were not meant to make our journey alone; we were meant to bear each other's burdens, and to let them bear ours. Friendship is perhaps the greatest of our responsibilities, and of our privileges. It is here, probably, that we leave our mark most permanently. And it is by what we *are*, in our deepest selves, that we influence, for good and evil, those with whom we live, those whom we should most desire to help and dread to injure.

But there is yet another avenue to God, which He wills that we should tread. I mean the path of suffering, the mystery of pain, which is a mystery not only in the faithless modern sense of an insoluble enigma, but in the truer sense of a sacramental initiation. Some of you perhaps may remember the following lines written by the schoolmaster-poet, T. E. Brown of Clifton:—

*There is a threefold oneness with the One ;
And he is one, who keeps
The homely laws of life ; who, if he sleeps,
Or wakes, in his true flesh God's will is done.*

*And he is one, who takes the deathless forms,
Who schools himself to think
With the All-thinking, holding fast the link,
God-riveted, that bridges casual storms.*

*But threefold one is he, who feels all pains
Not partial, knowing them
As ripples parted from the gold-beaked stem,
Wherewith God's galley ever onward strains.*

*To him the sorrows are the tension-thrills
Of that serene endeavour
Which yields to God for ever and for ever
The joy that is more ancient than the hills.*

I know that the acceptance of suffering is especially difficult to our generation. We realise, at least in words, that sacrifice is the form which suffering must take in a sinful world, and many of us are not backward in acts of self-devotion. But we have a horror of pain, such as was never felt in any previous age, and we claim individual justice, for ourselves and for others, with a new insistence and even indignation. But men are *not* by nature equal, and can never be made equal. It is our intrinsic inequalities, not our accidental external privileges or disabilities, which make it impossible to believe that God did not make some vessels for honour and some for dishonour upon this earth. The claim for justice must be wholly abandoned before it

can be granted, and the justice which is granted is very different from the claim which must be abandoned. Our divine model is one who, as Plato foresaw in that inspired passage of the Republic, spent his life in doing right and suffering wrong, and who, after enduring every kind of injustice, was at last crucified. If we ask whether we deserve our trials, we shall never know why they were sent upon us. They may be a wonderful privilege, like that of the stranger Simon the Cyrenian, who was privileged to bear the cross for Christ, whom he knew not, when His own disciples had proved themselves unworthy. The hardest of all trials are perhaps those which look like merely crippling infirmities, spoiling our careers and impairing our usefulness. But we must have faith that these too are part of God's good care for us. He weighs success and failure in different scales from ours; and I believe there are many who (to quote Plato again) have lived to be thankful for some "bridle of Theages" which has prevented them from realising their early dreams and ambitions. Certainly I believe it is true that those troubles which seem most unaccountable and irrational, often have a more purifying and elevating effect upon our characters than acts of self-denial which we choose for ourselves, with the direct object of doing some good, as we think, to ourselves or others. Our own well-intentioned efforts are

often blunders; what God sends can only fail if we are determined that it shall not succeed.

Of the prospect of death it is difficult to speak, because some good people dread it all their lives, while to others it does not seem terrible at all. It is not right for the latter class to judge the former, whose vitality may be more robust, and their faith not weaker. But surely the thought of death cannot be terrible, if we realise that not only the change which we call death, but the whole of our mortal life, is a dying and a birth into a higher existence. If even Marcus Aurelius, who scarcely dared to hope for a future life, could say, "Serenely greet the end of our journey, as an olive falls when it is ripe, blessing the branch that bare it, and giving thanks to the tree that gave it life," we who know that death is the gate of life shall not fear to meet it. "The truest end of life," says William Penn, "is to know the life that never ends. He that lives to live for ever, never fears dying. Nor can the means be terrible to him that heartily believes the end. For though death be a dark passage, it leads to immortality, and that is recompense enough for suffering of it."

Well; we have had our day of prayer and meditation, and we shall go back to our work helped, I trust, by what God has shown us

and said to us while we were on our knees.
How blessed are those minutes, when

*The eye sinks inward, and the heart lies plain,
And what we mean we say, and what we would, we
know.*

*A man becomes aware of his life's flow,
And hears its winding murmur, and he sees
The meadows where it glides, the sun, the breeze.
And there arrives a lull in the hot race
Wherein he doth for ever chase
That flying and elusive shadow, rest.
An air of coolness plays upon his face,
And an unwonted calm pervades his breast.
And then he thinks he knows
The hills where his life rose,
And the sea where it goes.¹*

Yes, we have seen to-day τὸ πρόσωπον τῆς
γενέσεως, the men that God meant us to be.
And "he that looketh into the perfect law,
the law of liberty, and continueth therein, the
same being not a hearer that forgetteth, but
a doer that worketh, that man shall be blessed
in his doings." God grant that so it may be
with each one of us.

¹ Matthew Arnold.

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